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300956Z May 03

UNCLAS HARARE 001080

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION MASS ACTION IN ZIM; HARARE

11. Under headline "First duty of army, police is to the nation" the independent daily "The Daily News" dedicated its May 30 editorial to urging Zimbabwe's uniformed forces not to use strong-arm tactics against demonstrators who may participate in next week's possible anti-government protests. Zimbabwe's main opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), has called for a week-long series of marches and protests aimed at forcing Robert Mugabe to step down. These protests are slated to begin on June 2. Editorial excerpts follow:
12. ". . .The first duty of members of the army and the police, whatever their orders, is to the people of Zimbabwe, regardless of their political affiliations. They cannot and must not side with tyranny. History will not look kindly on those State security agents who lose sight of this fact."

SULLIVAN